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Locavore Exploring the Sustainable Table: A Restaurant in Tobacco Row

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Virginia Commonwealth University

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LOCAVORE

EXPLORING THE SUSTAINABLE TABLE: A RESTAURANT IN TOBACCO ROW

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia
Commonwealth University.

by

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ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT

Locavore is a restaurant centered around the principles of sustainable agriculture: food that is organically, humanely, and sustainably raised from farms and cooperatives no further than 150 miles from Richmond—thus the “local” in Locavore. Like all restaurants, certain programmatic requirements were standard such as providing places to store, prepare, and eat the food, and restrooms. Yet the design of the space also helps answer the following questions:

How does sustainable differ from organic?

Is local necessarily better than foreign?

How does a restaurant embody community?



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INTRODUCTION

I believe our role as designers is to facilitate the conversation between client and site, between program and possibility. We are inherently tasked to push the boundary of what can be done—to see beyond a set of givens to what is possible. Asking the question “what if...?” of ourselves, the site, and the program is one of our most powerful tools. That question can spark rich discussions with the client, and also with ourselves as we journey through the design process, providing a firm foundation on which to make decisions—decisions that are well-grounded, insightful, and appropriate.

Last year, my intent was to research and study the influences of regional cuisines in Mediterranean cooking. Over the past decade, the “slow food” movement has had a profound impact on the cuisine of the area, especially in France and Italy. In those countries, the rise of American-style fast-food restaurants has served as an impetus to return to an artisanal approach to food: creating meals which employ quality ingredients, true to their “terroir” and season, prepared in a deliberate and thoughtful manner. Allen Weiss’ essay, “Culinary Manifestations of the Genius Loci” in Eating Architecture, details the change in french cuisine since the 1970s, influenced in large part by French chefs including Michel Bras, whose food is “often mentioned in an ecological context, owing...to its intimate and erudite relation to the environment.” Several American chefs have been promoting a return to more local, seasonal food for many years, among them Alice Waters whose restaurant, Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, has long been rated one the best in the world.

In The Omnivore’s Dilemma, Michael Pollan uses three meals as a way to research and test his knowledge about the foods he eats. His exploration of what defines “organic” food has prompted me to redefine my project into one not based on the idea of a regional cuisine, but on the idea of “sustainable” food practices.

Organic



What does it mean to be organic?
Who defines what can be labelled this way?
Is there an “organic” architecture?

Sustainable



How does sustainability differ from organic?
How is this achieved?
What materials are sustainable?

Local



Are there varying degrees of locality?
Is local necessarily better than foreign?
Is there a “local” architecture?

I feel that this new direction has brought me back, in a manner, to our study of William McDonough’s Cradle to Cradle our first semester. McDonough’s book challenges us as designers to (re)invent ways to live more symbiotically with our environment, both natural and built. How would the principles of green design apply to all aspects of food, from it’s production to final presentation on a plate? What does it mean to eat locally, and how does that inform the design of a restaurant?



SITE AND PROGRAM

Site History

Richmond provides rich historial context to exploration of food. Our proximity to the site of the first thanksgiving serves as an important reminder that without the help and knowledge of the native americans, the early colonists would not have survived. Several of the first taverns established in Virginia fed many of our founding fathers and were located in the neighborhood of Shockoe Bottom. The most famous of theses was the “Bird in Hand,” which was located at the corner of 25th and Main streets. The 17th Street market, first built in 1794 and replaced in the 1850s, is still in its original location. The present structure dates from 1913.

Convenient to the city docks and later railroad links, Shockoe Bottom was home to the largest flour mills in the south east, which were burned as the Confederate Army retreated from the city during the Civil War. The area was also the central warehouse district for tobacco since Richmond’s early days.

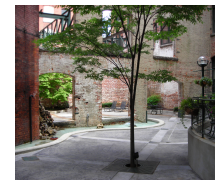
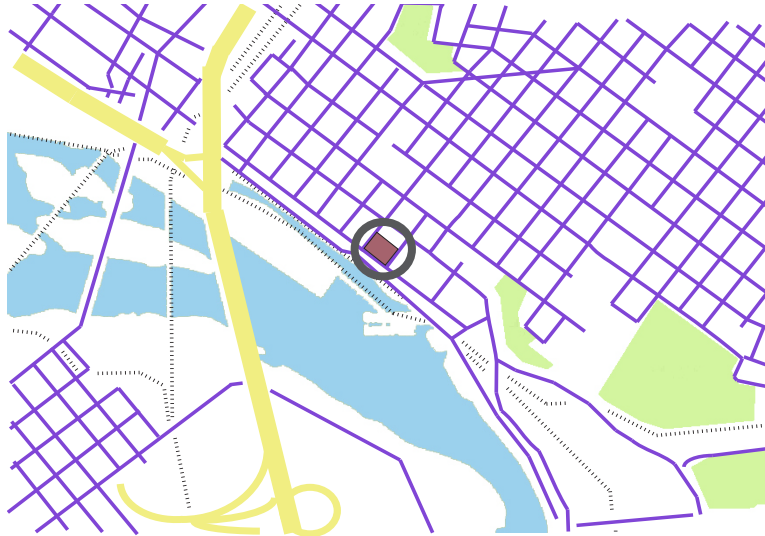
My project site is 2306 East Cary Street, in Shockoe Bottom. Built in 1901, the building served as the industrial warehouse first for American Cigar Company, then P. Lorillard Company which was subsequently bought by Philip Morris. The building interior features heavy timber beams, 14 foot ceilings, exposed brick walls, and large windows. Renovated in 2001 as part of the mixed-use development of several old tobacco warehouses along East Cary Street, it now features loft apartments on top floors, and restaurants and leasing offices on the ground floor. Old Original Bookbinder’s restaurant measures roughly 7,500 square feet including part of the outdoor patio space.



Tobacco workers outside a warehouse, circa 1900
Photo courtesy of Virginia Museum's
Historical Image Collection



Post Card featuring P. Lorillard Co. building
Courtesy of VCU Special Collections

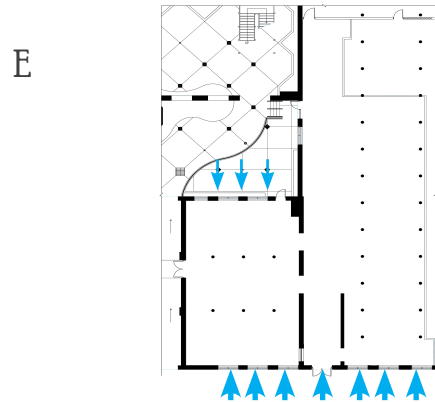
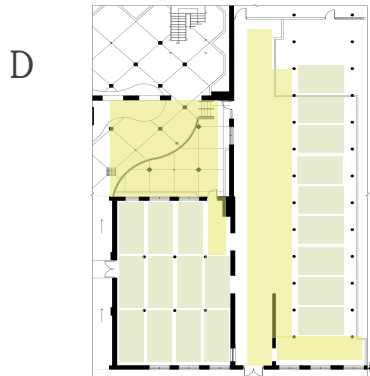
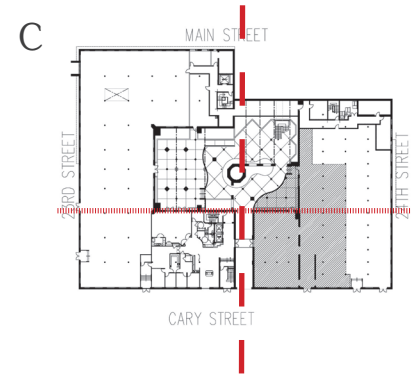
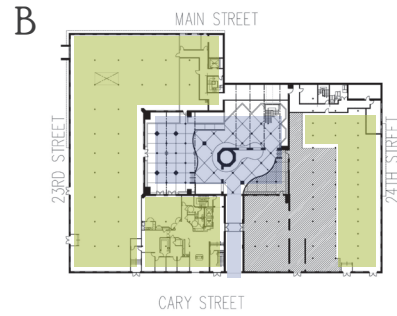
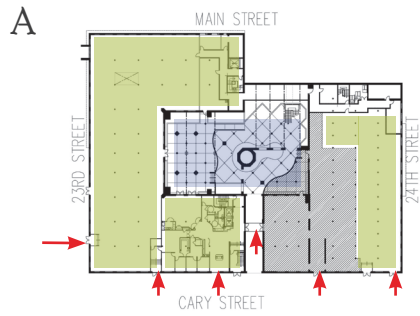


SITE AND PROGRAM

Site Analysis

The River Loft apartments comprise the dominant structure on the city block, facing south-west toward the elevated rail line and James River beyond. The two buildings enclose a central courtyard with the original smoke stack. During the renovations, the contracting company kept interior walls in the courtyard as an interesting accent, and they are still covered in glazed ceramic tiles. Most of the ground floor offices and the restaurant have access to the interior courtyard, yet it appears to be seldom used. Inside the building, thick brick walls (about 18") support an interior grid system of wooden beams and columns. The arched-top windows are not original to the building, but maintain their shape and mullion style. The ground floor, which houses the Old Original Bookbinder's restaurant, is concrete slab; top floors are 4" thick by 10' long tongue and groove hardwood. Columns are the original wood and are set 10' on center. All interior woodwork was sand-blasted during renovation and left unfinished.

The space designated for the thesis project opens directly onto East Cary Street, and enjoys natural light on that side, as well as some from the windows over-looking the courtyard. I have maintained the current restaurant's footprint in the building, but have operated on the outdoor space to activate it. The door from the restaurant to the breezeway currently serves as a fire exit. Spaces of interest that will need special consideration include the bricked walls immediately inside the existing entry to the restaurant, the long axis to the rear of the space, and the transition between interior and exterior courtyard.



- A Building Circulation to Use
- B Building Additive/Subtractive
- C Building Symmetry/Balance
- D Space Repetitive to Unique
- E Space Natural Light



SITE AND PROGRAM

F.O.H. CRITERIA MATRIX	sq footage	2000+ TOTAL	PAST/RENT/LESS	DRINK/NO	DRINK/NO	DRINK/NO	DRINK/NO
1) Host Station	100-200	2	Y	N	N		
2) BAR	800-1000	3, 8	N	N	Y		
3) MAIN DINING	1500	2, 8	Y	N	N		
4) PAT DINING	1500	8, 2	N	Y	N		IS A LINE? FLEXIBILITY OF USE?
5) PATIO DINING	800	8, 2	Y	N	N		
6) RESTROOMS	200-400	2, 3, 4	N	Y	Y		SEE TAB. 1000 MEN - 2 URINALS, 1 STALL WOMEN - 2 STALLS 2000+ MEN - 3 URINALS, 2 STALLS
7) BUS STATIONS	150	3, 4, 8	N	Y	Y		
8) KITCHEN	2000	3, 4, 8	N		Y		

BOH CRITERIA MATRIX	sq footage	2000+ TOTAL	PAST/RENT/LESS	DRINK/NO	DRINK/NO	DRINK/NO
1) RECEIVING OFFICE	150	2, 2	Y	N		
2) STORAGE	300-500	1, 3	Y	N		LOCKABLE, COOLED
3) PREP	1000	2, 4, 5	N	Y		HEAT VS OTHER
4) KITCHEN	1000	3, 5	N	Y		
5) BREAKFAST KITCHEN	200-300	3, 4	N	Y		EQUIPMENT IS HAND-DRIVEN
6) SANITATION	200-300	2	Y	Y		
7) EMPLOYEE RE/LOCKERS	100-200	1	Y	Y		ONE RE VS TWO?

In an effort to understand how restaurants work, in particular restaurants that included open display kitchens, the case studies in Martin E. Dorf's Restaurants that Work were particularly helpful. The book breaks down each case study restaurant, providing floorplans of the restaurant as a whole, and more detailed plans of the kitchens. The book also includes a written analysis of the space planning and kitchen designs according to the type of restaurant and food preparation requirements. Based on those examples, I was able to break down the program for this project into very detailed areas, and allot rough square footages for each space. At left is my completed criteria matrix for both front of house and back of house of the restaurant.

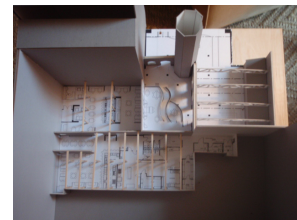
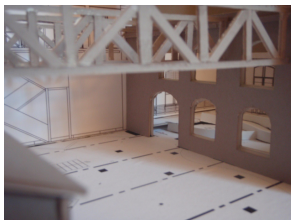
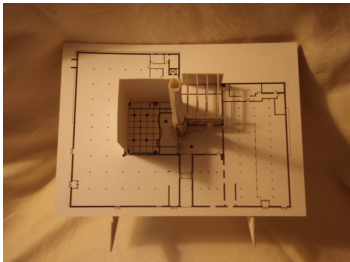
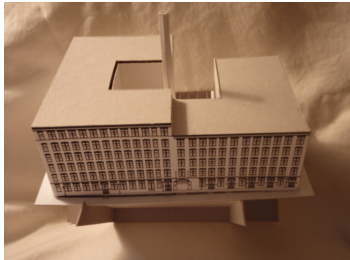
Program Analysis



PROCESS WORK

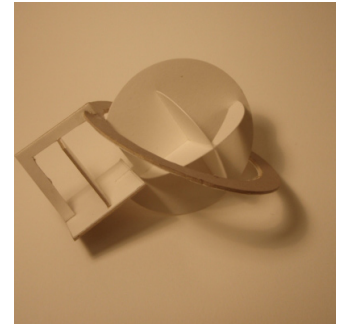
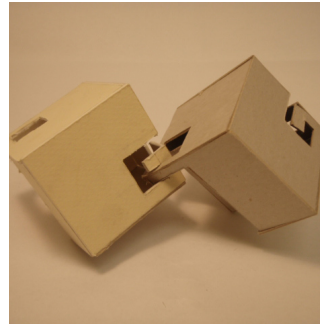
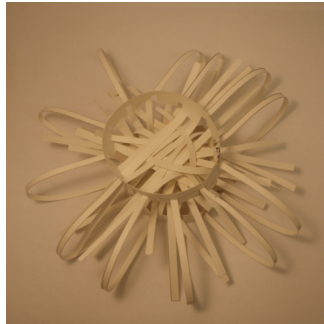
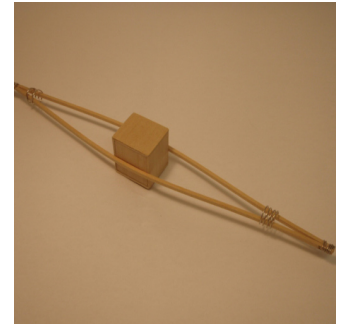
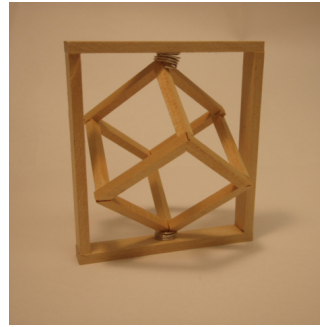
I created two models of the space: a large one showing the interior and patio plans in relation to the overall dimensions of the building, constructed at 1/8" scale, and a smaller model showing the overall scale of the building in relation to the height of the smoke stack at 1/64" scale.

Modelling Space



Modelling Concept

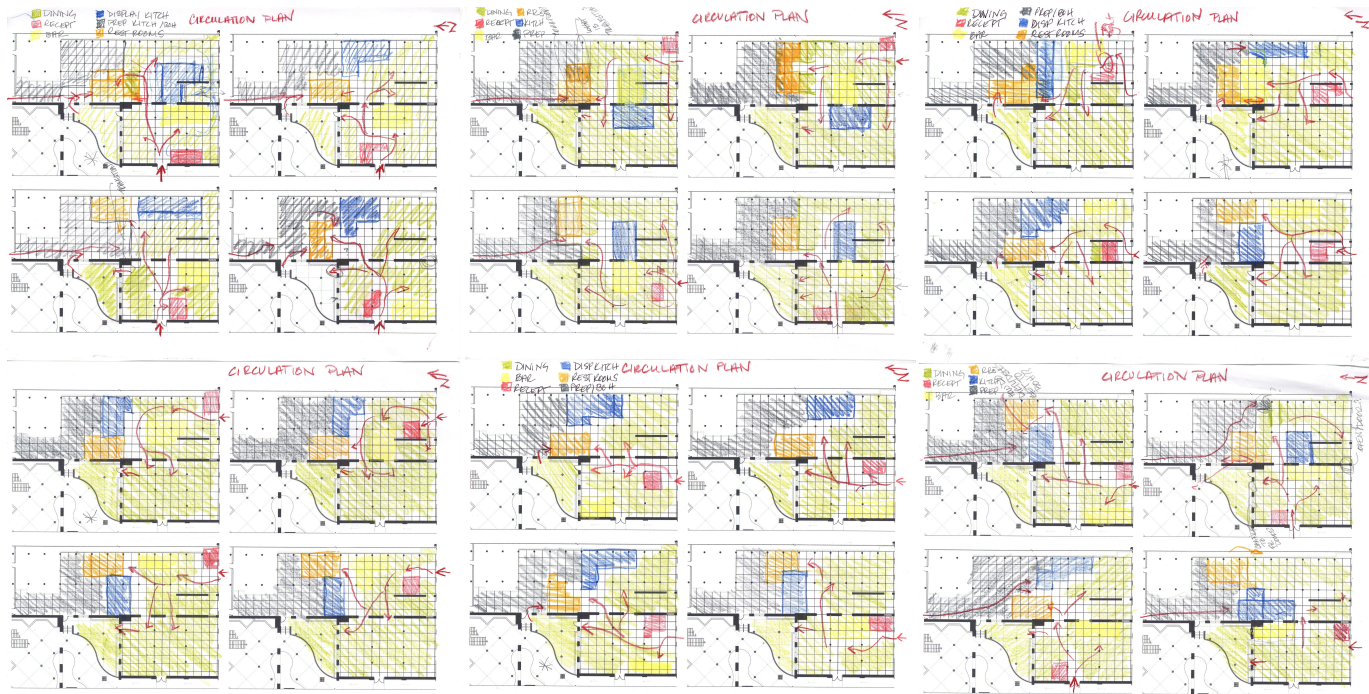
The pictures below follow my experimentation with concept models throughout this semester. I began with the literal: a cube being sustained within a square, yet that model did not adequately address the larger issue of community, where more numerous and varied forms might be involved. I explored ways of creating linkages within forms—both random and systematic—that might form a community while maintaining easily visible joint conditions. My final model, of a square and circle sharing a framework, more accurately depicts the dependency of one upon another, while still maintaining each's identity.



PROCESS WORK

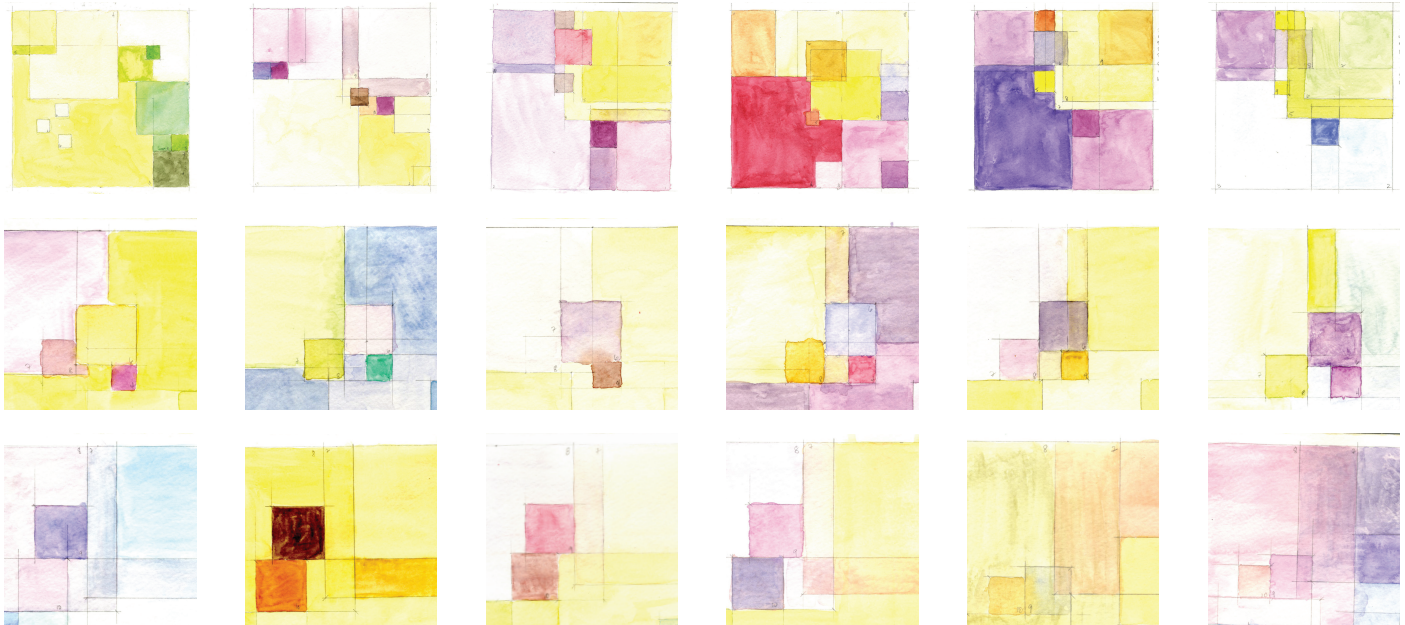
Through a series (not all are pictured here) of block plans, I could quickly generate several floorplan options and use them to analyze circulation patterns and general layouts. Throughout the series, I tried to vary the entry, bar, and kitchen locations to see which worked the best.

Circulation Plans



Adjacency Studies

These watercolor studies helped determine the adjacencies and relationships within my space. I worked in groups of six: the first group to help me establish my floor plan, the subsequent group to explore hierarchy and overlap, and the final set as a test of my design solution.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The raw space features 18” thick brick walls, which separates the space into two areas. Both feature original wood columns and beams, establishing a grid system. In an effort to activate the two distinct areas of the plan, the entryway and bar were moved. Guests enter through a vestibule which serves as a buffer between the street and interior. The plan offers several options for flexibility for larger groups, which could use any of the three dining areas depending on the size of the party. Restrooms are located as closely as possible to each seating area, so guests do not have cross the entire restaurant. The back of house is laid out very similarly to the restaurant currently occupying the space, and could easily be reconfigured to expand the cooking area.

Floor Plan

Room Key

Entry/Reception	1
Bar and Lounge	2
Tasting Room	3
Main Dining Room	4
Display Kitchen	5
Prep Kitchen	6
Dry Storage	7
Dish washing	8
Cold Storage	9
Employee Restroom	10
Trash	11
Office	12
Men’s Restrooms	13
Women’s Restrooms	14
Indoor Dining	15
Patio Dining	16



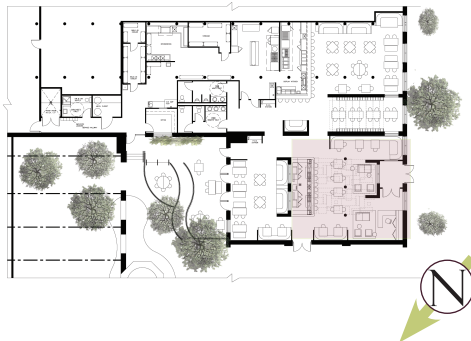
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Entry and Bar Details



LOCAL VS GLOBAL

ORGANIC VS SUSTAINABLE



The bar area is visible to passersby on East Cary street through windows that look out over East Cary Street. A lowered ceiling over the main bar, extending to the vestibule wall, features acoustical panels that are arranged in a loose grid pattern, overlapping in some areas, and not in others, and in a way reflecting the nature of Richmond's neighborhoods.

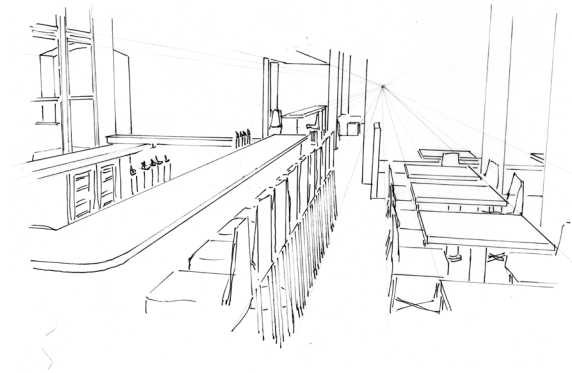
The character of the existing building was preserved in the brick walls, which could be used to highlight local artists work, and the heavy wooden columns and beams. Materials were chosen for the space based on their sustainability: among them are reclaimed wood floors, concrete counter tops, and original windows from the site.

OPAQUE VS TRANSPARENT

The window wall behind the bar, made from materials claimed from the site, offers views through the entire space and tempts guests to explore the patio beyond. The open kitchen is easily seen from the bar as well. Banquette seating along the sides is tucked into areas providing increased privacy.

INDIVIDUAL VS COMMUNITY

The bar area offers three distinct seating areas: lounge seating close to the entry and reception areas, traditional bar service, and banquette or booth seating that can accommodate either an eight-, four-, or two-top. Guests have the opportunity to mingle along the bar, or sit with a date at a more private table.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Dining Details

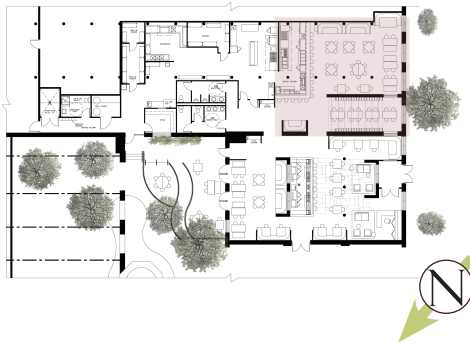


LOCAL VS GLOBAL

ORGANIC VS SUSTAINABLE

As is the bar, the main dining area and tasting room are visible from the East Cary Street, with pedestrians also afforded a view of a kitchen in action. "Neighborhoods" are created in separate banquette tables along the east wall of the restaurant. The solitary booth, which straddles the tasting room and counter seating, gives those diners the sense of being a part of a larger group.

The tasting room takes advantage of the existing walls, spaced just 15' apart. The wine racks are made with salvaged wood, while overhead, the barrel effect ceiling uses ecoresin to imply a form normally associated with wineries. Materials in these spaces are also chosen for their sustainability: carpeting made of almost 100% recycled material, being a part of a larger group.

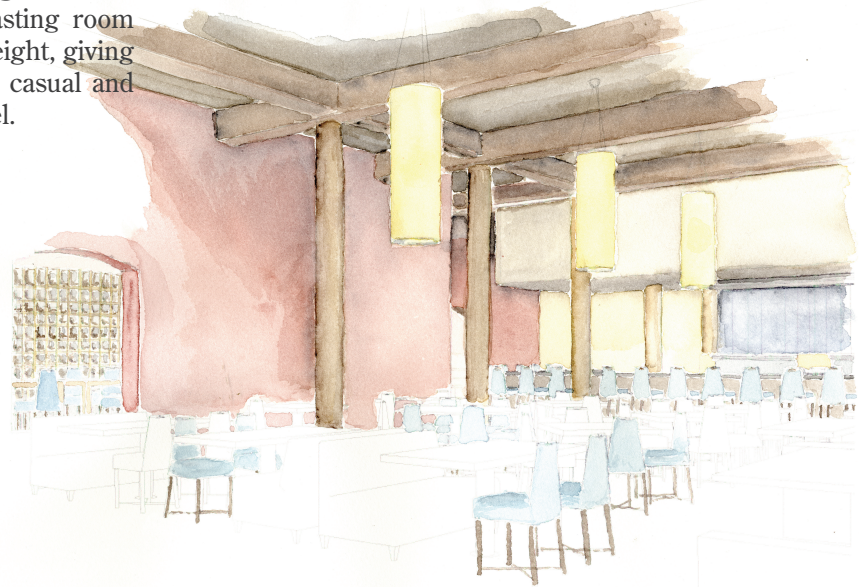


OPAQUE VS TRANSPARENT

The completely exposed kitchen allows diners to view their meal being prepared from prep work to plating, yet no one wants to see the dirty dishes in the sink—thus the more hidden back of house. The tasting room's ceiling, meant to echo a barrel vaulted cellar, doesn't obscure the original framework of the building, and uses minimal structure to hold it in place. Diners have views through the tasting room, into the bar area.

INDIVIDUAL VS COMMUNITY

As in the bar area, multiple seating choices offer diners the chance to connect with others (at the kitchen counter), or remain aloof (at a two- or four-top). The expansive space of the main dining area is broken by grid of columns, which create a sense of neighborhood. Tables in the tasting room are at counter height, giving the area a more casual and approachable feel.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Patio Details



LOCAL VS GLOBAL

The dining area behind the bar, when closed off from the patio, becomes the most secluded of “neighborhoods” within the restaurant as a whole. Diners are welcomed into the world of the cooperative farm through the use of container gardens and planting beds on the patio.

ORGANIC VS SUSTAINABLE

The tasting room takes Ample space is provided in the courtyard for the restaurant to grow some of it's own food, either in container form or in planting beds along the east and north walls. Courtyard materials could include Virginia slate or poured concrete. The inside dining space maintains original brick walls and window casings, with the exception of the new doors.

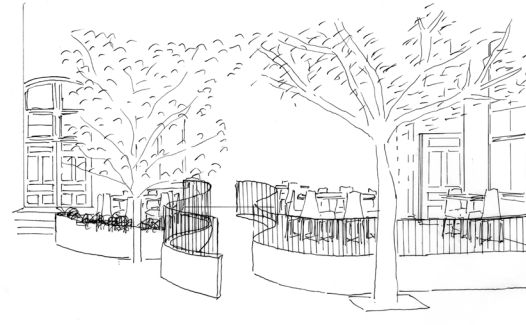


OPAQUE VS TRANSPARENT

The dining area located directly behind the bar is the most light-filled area, gaining direct light through french doors to the patio, and from the windows behind the bar. The french doors swing out from the middle, in effect blurring the edge of the building from the outside space.

INDIVIDUAL VS COMMUNITY

Open to the patio, the dining area becomes part of the outdoors, gaining views of the pond feature around the smoke stack. The patio is divided into two spaces by an ADA ramp, with the smaller of the two spaces becoming a private dining space for a group of four or six guests.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Occupancy Type: Assembly A-2

Maximum Occupancy: 150

Lavatories: 3 women's restroom
2 men's restroom
1 employee restroom
1 utility sink in kitchen

Waterclosets/Urinals: 2 women's restroom
3 men's restroom
1 employee restroom

Egress: 5 exits
Main entrance 2 steps
Rear exit 3 steps
Patio includes ADA compliant ramp

Key

Lavatories	•
Waterclosets	•
Exits	•
Stairs	•
Ramp	•

RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

Mas Les Cols
Olot, Spain
RCR Arquitectos

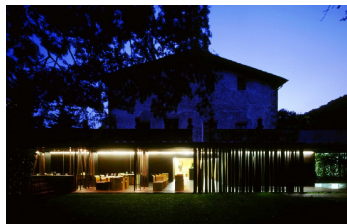
Site Case Study

Chef/owner Fina Puigdevall renovated the restaurant on the ground floor of her family's 16th century house in Catalonia in 2002, a space that at once point was the house stables. Puigdevall's meals—highly orchestrated affairs, featuring up to 12 separate courses—draw heavily from local ingredients and cooking traditions, and celebrate quality ingredients. The grounds of the restaurant provide much of its own food; surrounding the masia are vegetable and herb gardens, and chickens roam the grounds.

The architects' program specifically called for a link between the kitchen and the gardens, between the production and cooking of food, resulting in a kitchen that is as beautiful as the main restaurant. Natural light floods the space, outfitted entirely in stainless steel, through a window that looks out on an outdoor patio and fountain. In the rest of the restaurant, the architects also engaged a single-handed approach to materials, using steel for furniture and room-dividers. The single use of material also emphasizes the difference between new and old, applied versus existing architecture.

The original structure is composed of heavy stone and plaster walls, with some areas featuring vaulted ceilings. The 2004 renovation expanded on the north-facing elevation.

The entry and seating areas on this side of the building feature glass walls that can be retracted during the summer months. Whether this also holds true for the private dining spaces at either end of the southern end of the building, I do not know. The loggia on this side appears to be designated as a lounge area, with sofas and chairs as opposed to table seating. The purpose or use of the long blank space on the west side of the building was not identified in any of my sources.



The view of the masia from the garden
©Eugenie Pols

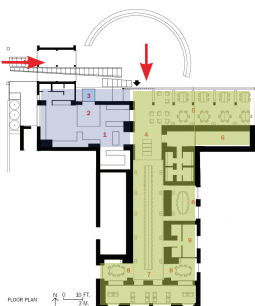


The kitchen
©Eugenie Pols

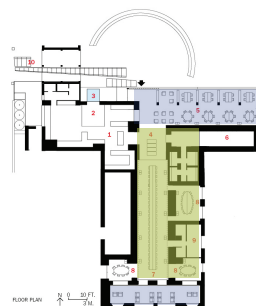


The banquet seating area
©Eugenie Pols

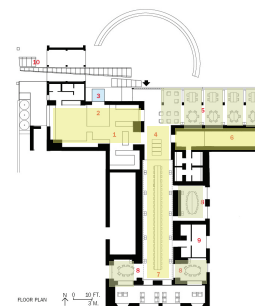
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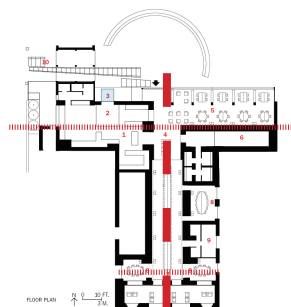
B



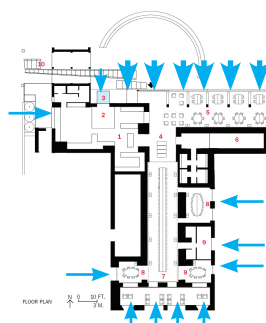
C



D



E



Floor Plan ©Architectural Record

- A Circulation to Use
- B Additive and Subtractive
- C Repetitive to Unique
- D Symmetry and Balance
- E Natural Light



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

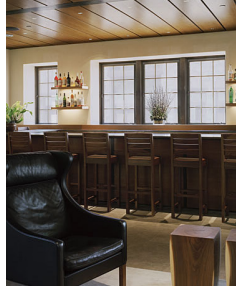
Blue Hill at Stone Barns
Pocantico Hills, New York
Azfour Guzy Architects

Site Case Study

Dan Barber's first restaurant, Blue Hill, opened in New York City in 2000, focused on highlighting the food from local purveyors of the farmers stalls sold at the market in the Washington Square Park neighborhood. Their second location, Blue Hill at Stone Barns in the Hudson Valley is just 35 minutes from Manhattan. On 80 acres of land donated by David Rockefeller, it includes both a restaurant and the Stone Barn Center for Food and Agriculture, a non-profit farm, educational center and restaurant. Their mission is to demonstrate, teach and promote sustainable, community-based food production. Their farming practices were directly influenced by Joel Salatin, whose "management-intensive grazing" form of farming is a model for sustainable agriculture. Their mission is succinctly stated:

"By working in partnership with our environment instead of resisting its natural tendencies, we will produce food without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides.... We will use an intensively managed rotation method in our garden and greenhouse beds, preserving the soil and locking in important nutrients.....Through our choices of food and ingredients, we—chefs, waiters, diners—are inescapably active participants in not just eating, but in agriculture."

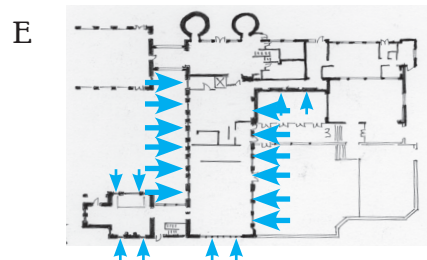
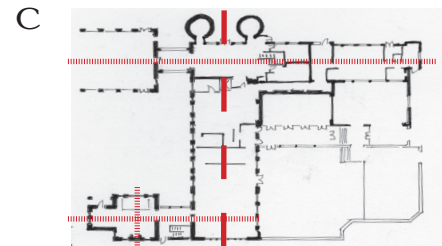
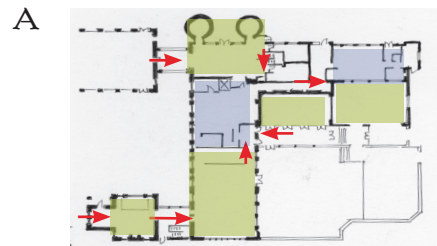
Guests enter the restaurant proper through a series of spaces that give a sense of progression, building up to the entry to the main dining space in the large renovated barn. This space overlooks an interior garden, laid out in a very formal style. The silos were redesigned into a lounge seating area and coat check. It is not apparent from the plan how diners move from that area into the main dining space without passing the kitchen, and possibly getting entangled with the wait staff serving food. Similarly-sized breezeways seem to connect the barn structure to the rest of the site, laid out to the west.



Interior Views
Photo ©Michael Moran, Mora McEnvoy



View of the Barns from the East
Photo ©Michael Moran, Mora McEnvoy



- A Circulation to Use
- B Additive and Subtrac-
- C Symmetry and Bal-
- D Repetitive to Unique
- E Natural Light



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

Holly Hunt Corporate Headquarters
Chicago, Illinois
Piotrowski + Ecker

Site Case Study

Custom furniture and fabric designer Holly Hunt moved her company headquarters into a renovated warehouse building in the Greektown neighborhood of Chicago in 2000. Originally planned to house just 3,700 square feet of warehousing space for the Great Plains textile line, the project expanded to cover the entire floor, a space of over 20,000 square feet, and house the entire company headquarters.

Architects Robert Piotrowski and Dea Ecker started first with cleaning up the interior shell of the building to minimize clutter—the walls and columns were entirely sandblasted and all the electrical and mechanical systems were consolidated along perimeter walls. They used the rhythm of windows and columns as an organizing grid, dividing the space into offices, conference rooms, and communal workspaces along three main corridors. Rooms designated for storage, computer network equipment, fabric library, and kitchen are located on the western side of the space.

In order not to impede the natural light coming in through the large windows on the north, east, and southern sides, the architects used extruded glass for glazing panels to divide space and provide privacy, instead of sheetrock walls.

A Circulation to Use

B Natural Light

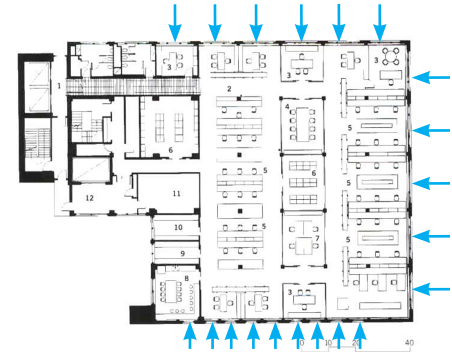
C Symmetry and Balance

D Repetitive to Unique

A



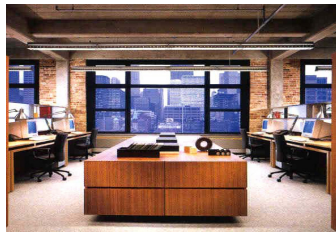
B



C



D



Office Spaces
Photos and Plan ©Interior Design



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

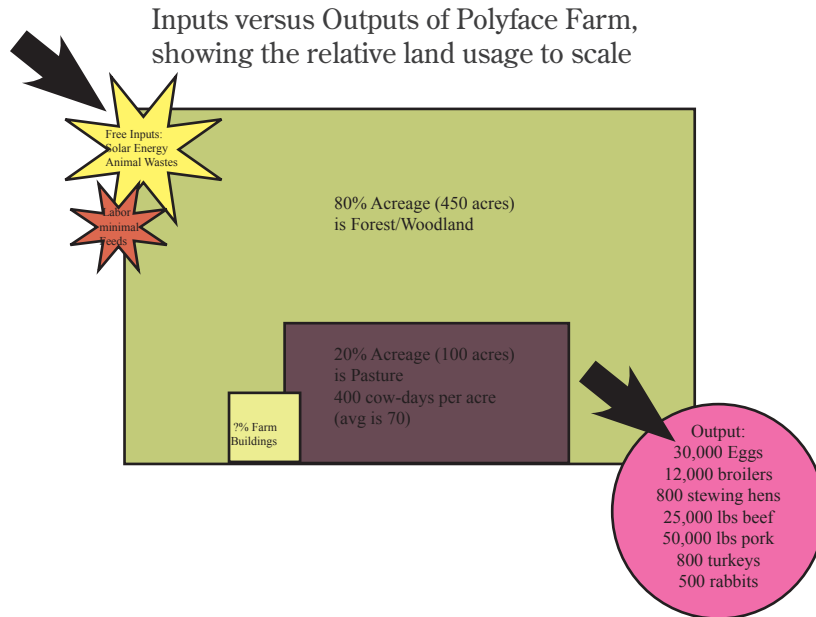
Polyface Farms
Swoope, Virginia
Joel Salatin, Farmer

Process Case Study

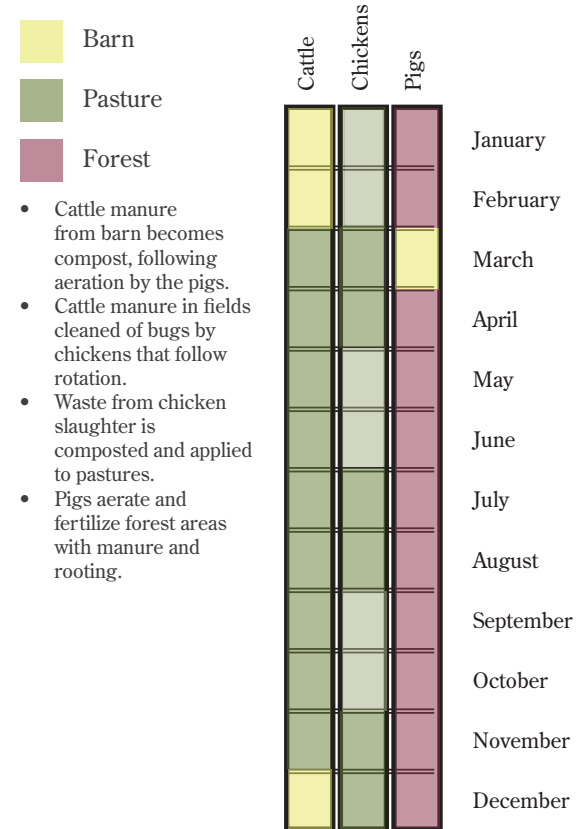
Rotational grazing is the process of moving livestock to fresh paddocks on a specific time schedule, to allow pastures to regrow. This type of farming is a carefully orchestrated choreography, a dance between weather, grass and livestock that requires skillful decisions and close monitoring of the pastures and the growing conditions of the grasses by the farmer. His tools include modern electric fencing and innovative water-delivery devices which he uses to contain the livestock to certain parts of the pasture. Overall, feed costs decline and animal and soil health improves when animals harvest their own feed in a well-managed rotational grazing system.

Joel Salatin inherited Polyface from his father, who purchased what was then 550 acres of land that had been over-utilized and the soils were badly depleted. Over the years, Joel has returned the majority of those acres to woodland, which serve a vital purpose in water conservation, wind control, and raw materials for his composting needs. The forest areas also provide the “free range” for his pigs, and provide necessary shelter for birds (which in turn help keep the bug population in check). Only about 20% of his total acreage is devoted to pasture, which if divided into the pounds of beef produced on his farm, is unusual in terms of productivity.

Polyface’s products, including chickens, eggs, beef, pork, and until this year turkeys, are only distributed within a 100 mile radius of the farm. According to Fred Magdoff and Harold van Es in Building Better Soils for Better Crops, on average, the food we eat has traveled about 1,300 miles from field to processor to distributor to consumer. Joel’s success in this farming method, as told by Michael Pollan in The Omnivore’s Dilemma, has now become the model of sustainable, organic, and local agriculture.



Main Livestock Rotations of Polyface Farm, over the course of one year (estimated)



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

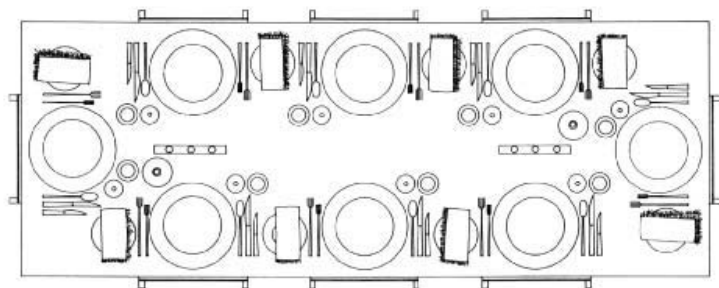
Sarah Wigglesworth Architects
9 Stock Orchard Street
Islington, England

Process Case Study

Sarah Wigglesworth in designing her own home and office, used innovative spatial, formal and material solutions to housing design. In describing the process, she says, “The narrative of the house was derived from an awareness of how the rituals of eating played out on the plane of the dining table...The manner in which the guests sitting round a table interact during the course of a meal can be compared to the way in which people interact in the space of a house. Everyone around a table obeys social rules, just as we do in life, and in the movement of props during the dinner...all describe particular relationships and events over time. The drawings of the table top describe how similar these ideas are, in space and time, and link the table top with the plan form of the Straw House.”

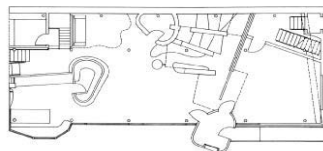
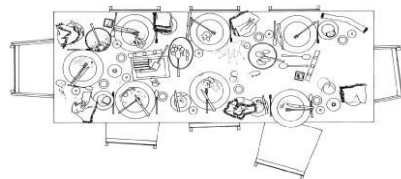
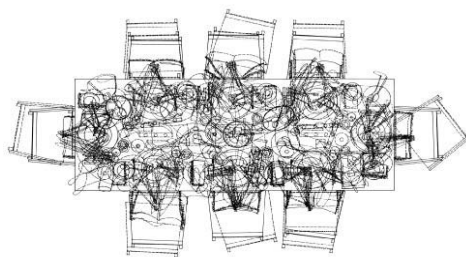
Wigglesworth used a variety of low-tech building materials, selected for their insulating properties, in innovative ways. The office portion of the building, which faces a railway line, is constructed from several different materials: sandbags filled with lime, sand, and cement that will over time harden into a permanent wall, maintaining the original shape of the sandbags, a duvet type cladding, and the first ever domestic use of gabion walls (the steel cages often seen on the sides of highways) filled with recycled concrete. The north wall of the main house is made of standard strawbales, stacked between load-bearing timber ladders and protected on the outside with a translucent screen, which allows the bales to breathe, with the inside faces plastered for fire retardancy.

Other sustainable building ideas that were incorporated in the house include a green roof planted with meadow grasses and wild strawberries, composting toilets, and rain-water collection systems and solar pumps that irrigate the roof and feed toilets and washing machines. A five-floor tower of books rises through the roof, acts as a thermal flue, catching the wind and encouraging natural ventilation to cool the house in the summer.



THE LAY OF THE TABLE

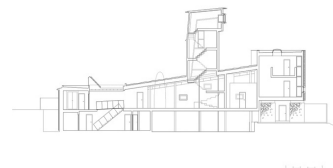
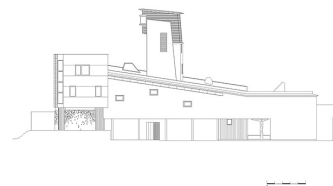
An architectural ordering of place, status, and function. A frozen moment of perfection. This is how architects see.



THE MEAL
Use begins to undermine the apparent stability of the (architectural) order. Traces of occupation in time. The recognition of life's disorder.

THE TRACE
The dirty tablecloth, witness of disorder. A palimpsest. This is the reality of domestic life.

THE LAY OF THE PLAN
The trace transformed into the plan of our house. Clutter filling the plan(e). Domestic difficulties interrupting the order of the grid.



Photos and Plans ©Sarah Wigglesworth Architects



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

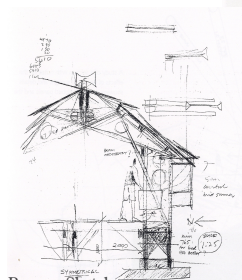
Glen Murcutt
Marika-Alderton House
Yirrkala, Australia

Process Case Study

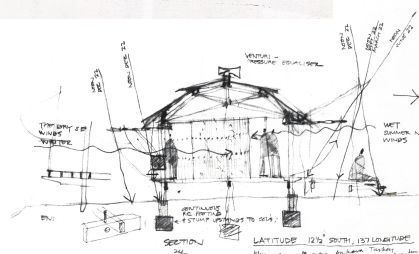
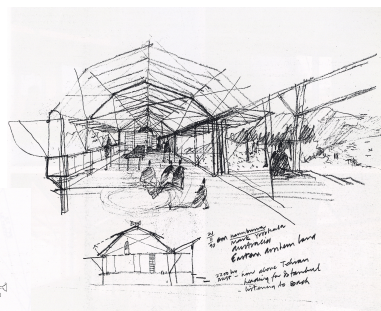
In building this house for an Aboriginal client and her family, Glen Murcutt incorporated his years of knowledge of building very site- and climate-specific houses, and tempered those programmatic requirements with the cultural preferences and beliefs of his client.

The site, located in the Northern Territory along the Gulf of Carpentaria (between Australia and Palau/New Guinea), is in a tropical climate subject to seasonal monsoons and cyclones, which can wind velocities of up to 200km/hr. The house was prefabricated off-site and features a composite structure of steel frame and Australian hardwoods. Murcutt designed the building without any glazing, using a system of plywood and timber slatted flaps that open and close to allow for ventilation and privacy.

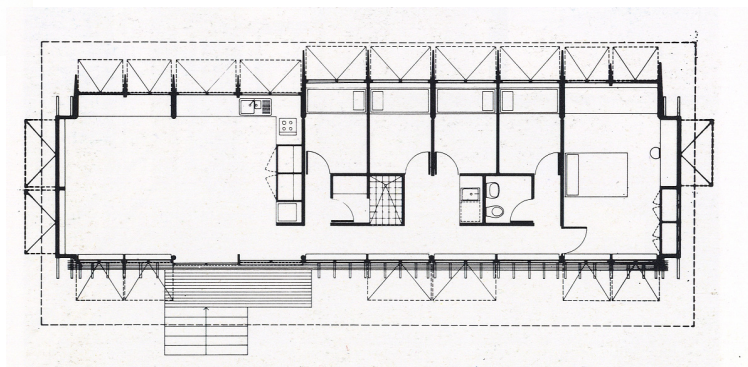
According to Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, he spent three years researching the site and the client's way of life, reading widely on Aboriginal culture. He also undertook the study of white-designed and built Aboriginal housing, long considered ill-suited to the culture and a failure. Some cultural considerations Murcutt incorporated include: there is no breezeway which might allow the entry of evil spirits; the occupants had to be able to see the horizon, and any approaching visitors without being seen from the outside in order to avoid eye contact so as not to need to welcome any and all visitors; one bathroom had to be located at the core of the house, away from public areas, for women. This room is also reinforced for cyclone protection. Furthermore, the children's bedrooms are located on the east side of the building, parents' to the west, reflecting the Aboriginal idea of people's occupation of space as corresponding to the rising and setting of the sun. In addition to systematic research on the site and cultural considerations, Murcutt's design process involved space planning and sketches of sun angles, building construction details, and perspective drawings. Murcutt maintains a sole-proprietorship practice, and so all the work is done by him alone. He does, when needed, consult with engineers.



Process Sketches



Interior Details
Photos ©Francoise Fromonot



Plan and Exterior View
Photos ©Francoise Fromonot



RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

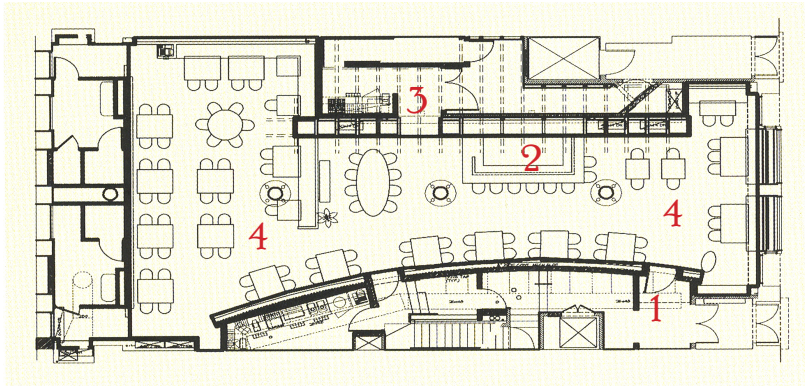
Craft
New York, New York

Program Case Study

Set in a section of a department store built in the late 1880s, Tom Colicchio concept for Craft was “to explore the full flavor of each artisanally-raised ingredient on the seasonal menu, and to serve these unadorned.” The architects took this concept to heart, leaving the existing structure –brick walls, terracotta columns, and 14 foot ceilings–almost as found. To this base, they added steel in the form of the custom mesh and steel wine wall, the 1/2” thick steel counter top on the bar, and leather clad wall. Diners have the chance to “craft” their own meal, choosing from menu items prepared a la carte, or can opt for a set tasting menu of twelve items.

The architects were able to capitalize on the height of the ceilings, and use that vertical space to highlight the restaurant’s large selections of wine. Housing over 3,500 bottles of wine would otherwise take up valuable floor space.

The restaurant holds quite a few guests, more than many other case studies, and does so in a smaller area. Having the kitchen on a separate floor might help with ventilation concerns (no worries of food-cooking smells permeating the dining room), but could contribute to bottlenecks, depending on how the food makes it upstairs. No floor plan was given to help with the analysis of the kitchen layout.

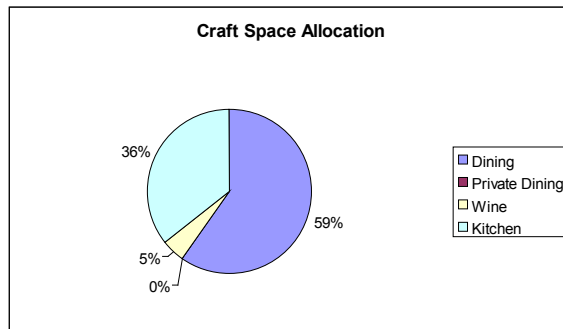


Floor Plan ©Bentel & Bentel Architects

- 1 Entry
- 2 Bar
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Dining



Photos ©Eduard Hueber, Bill Bettencourt



Architect:	Bentel & Bentel
Owner/Chef:	Tom Colicchio
Year Opened:	March 2001
Number of Seats:	130
Total Area:	@ 6000 sq. ft
Front of House	2800
Back of House	2975
Menu:	Seasonal, a la carte

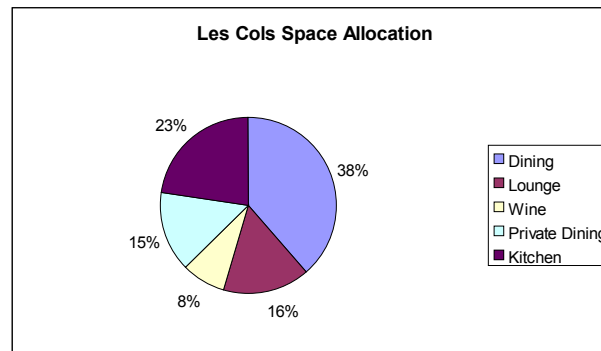
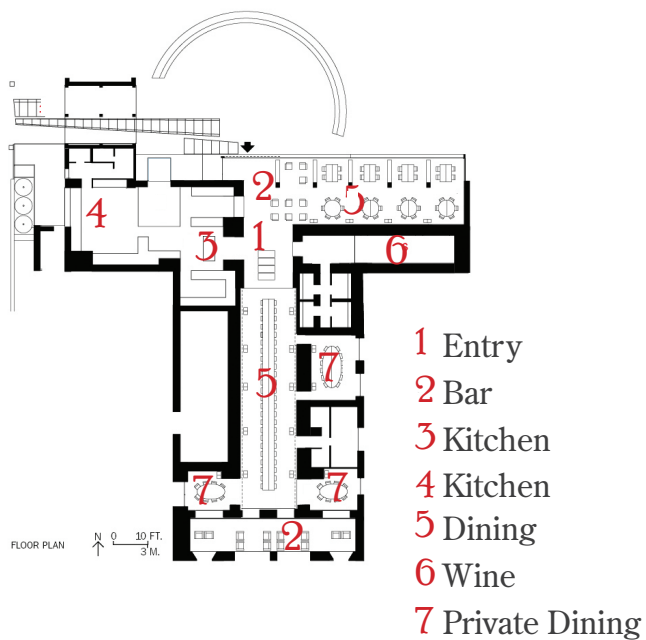


RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

Mas les Cols
Olot, Spain

Program Case Study

From the plan and pictures, it is apparent that the architects capitalized on the building's main drawback—a long central axis with very little natural light. The private dining areas were established in the three smaller, vaulted spaces most likely to play to each space's special character and separateness. The steel screens at the front of the house serve to form a grid, into which similar seating areas were inserted. The kitchen is divided into three separate work areas, each handling a different cooking method and process. Natural light here is provided primarily by the window well at the heart of the space, the quality of which is tempered by the green wall and water feature.



Architect:	RCR Arquitectos
Owner:	Fina Puigdevall
Year Opened:	June 2002
Number of Seats:	90
Total Area:	@ 5,000 sq ft
Front of House	4,000 sq ft
Back of House	1,000 sq ft
Menu:	new Catalan, prix fixe



Photo ©Bethan Ryder

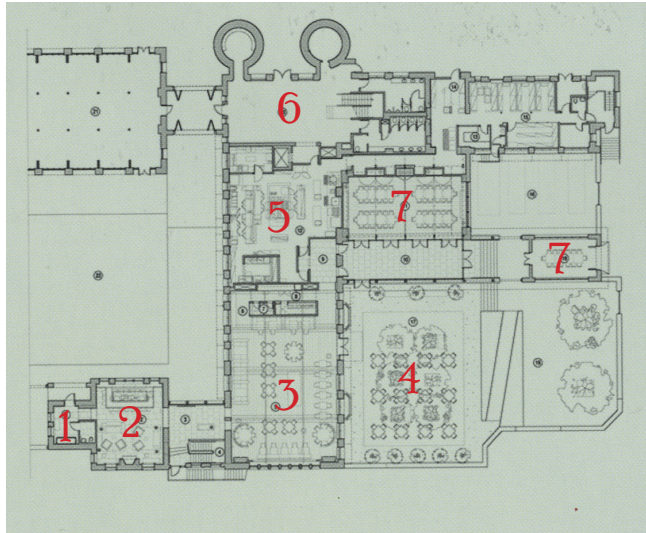


RESEARCH CASE STUDIES

Blue Hill at Stone Barns Pocantico Hills, New York

The kitchens are centrally located for access to the main and private dining areas. What appear to be administrative areas are set well away from the main dining area, but still on the long axis from the education center and within easy reach of the private dining spaces. It appears that the dining areas enjoy quite a bit of natural light, particularly on the east wall facing the kitchen garden.

Much of the original structure remains, including heavy stone walls, some of which are newly finished with either plaster or drywall inside. Exposed structure in the form of steel trusses along the length of the main dining area provide a contemporary aesthetic in which the function of the units is celebrated and elevated to an art.



Floor Plan ©Asfour Guzy Architects

- 1 Entry
- 2 Bar
- 3 Main Dining
- 4 Outdoor Dining
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Event Entry
- 7 Event Dining

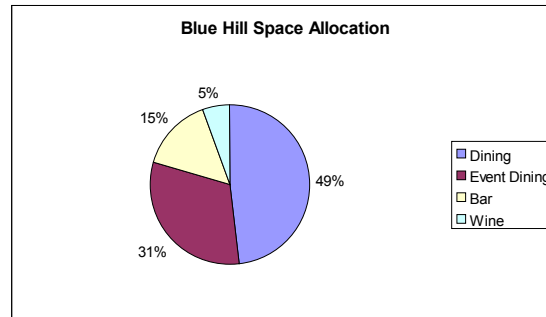


Photo ©Asfour Guzy Architects

Architect:	Asfour Guzy Architects
Chef/Owner:	Dan Barber
Year Opened:	2004
Number of Seats:	90 inside/64 outside
Total Area:	@ 4,000 sq ft
Front of House	1,750
Back of House	1,295
Menu:	Seasonal, prix fixe



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